Annex "A," Subparagraph 1k,

Sociological Background

RELIGION

795 781 771 The Vepsians are officially Greek Catholic. The influence of the Church has been, however, very superficial, limited mainly to the observance of formalities, such as the sign of the cross, bowing down to the floor, and so on. Under such conditions the old, heathen beliefs have had an excellent chance to survive among the Vepsians up to the present day. Sometimes certain features of the Christian religion have been mixed with superstitions. Thus a Vepsian family, for instance, was afraid of breaking the fasts for fear that this might cause the sickness of a cow or another animal.

776 The Vepsian heathen religion is based on a belief in spirits. The dwelling house and all other buildings have their protective spirits, called "masters" and "mistresses." Such are pert-izhand 'master of the hut,' lavan izhand ' master of the cow-shed,' lavan emag 'mistress of the cow-shed,' külbetin izhand 'master of the bathhouse,' gomnan izhand 'master of the kiln,' and gomnan emag 'mistress of the kiln,' etc.; the two last-mentioned are called also rigibukoo and rigibab, respectively. Entering the bathhouse, the people bow toward each corner and ask a